

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



NEWS RELEASE

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Davis Statement on IT Training

Washington, D.C. – Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) issued the following statement today on the GAO report titled, *GAO-04-791 Information Technology – Training Can Be Enhanced by Greater Use of Leading Practices*:

“The E-Government Act of 2002 authorized a number of initiatives to further the Federal government’s use of information technology to improve government services and operations. The focus of the act was to address the question of how to bring our analog government into the digital age. Compared to the private sector, the Federal Government was moving at an Old Economy speed in terms of realizing the true potential of Electronic Government. The Federal government has made great strides since the passage of the E-Gov Act but is currently jeopardizing any future improvements due to ineffective IT training.

“Last year, GAO identified 22 leading IT training practices used by the private sector to implement effective IT training. As of today, only five of those leading practices were in great use by Federal agencies. Even though the Federal government spent \$60 billion last year on IT, government operations can only be as good as the technology it employs, and that technology can only be as good as the worker who implements it. If our IT workers are not receiving the best training, we cannot expect much of a return on that \$60 billion investment. Remember, what matters is not how much money you spend, but how you spend the money.

“It is essential that the Federal government retains and recruits talented IT workers, even as we compete against the higher salaries and the comprehensive training offered by the private sector. The Federal Government is facing a personnel crisis of epic proportions in the near future, especially in areas of IT. By 2006, 50% of the government’s IT workforce will be eligible to retire. Therefore, it’s essential that we have a training curriculum developed to help the Federal government attract, develop and keep a talented IT workforce.

“While OPM has done a good job in issuing policies regarding IT training, it needs to take a step further. The E-Gov Act requires OPM to develop performance standards for effective IT training and to provide oversight on individual agencies’ implementation of those training provisions. We were behind before the E-Gov Act – we don’t want to return to the same spot. Until OPM places greater emphasis in the area of IT training, the government will not be able to catch up to the private sector.”

The GAO report can be found at: <http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-791>

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